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The U.S. Department of Labor operates through 10 regional offices located in major cities across the country. If you want a local angle on a news or feature story provided through this service--or have a direct news inquiry--you may contact one of the offices listed below. This listing includes the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the Public Information Directors and the states in their regions:

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Week of January 3, 1977

BLACK EXECUTIVE EDITOR WANTS TO
REACH A BROAD AUDIENCE

WASHINGTON -- "Our job is to reach as broad an audience as possible--from economic policymakers to the general reading public."

That is the way Robert W. Fisher, black executive editor of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' widely read Monthly Labor Review, sees his job.

However, Fisher is keenly aware of what he calls "the success of the MLR within a basic limitation."

"MLR is generally read by professionals and students in economics and statistics, by industrial relations practitioners, and so on," Fisher notes. "Most of the rest of the reading public don't read MLR."

As part of a commitment to make the Monthly Labor Review more appealing to the "general reader," Fisher gives high priority to material that meets the needs of the economist and "general reader" interested in economic affairs.

The Review has been changing continually over the years. Articles are increasingly chosen with the total labor force in mind. In addition to standard information on developments in the fields of labor relations, labor law, consumer prices, and employment, more articles appear on the relationship of blacks and whites in the workplace, on women and their changing role in the work force, on workers of Spanish origin, on youth, and on the "behaviorial" approaches to work.

Heading a staff of 11, Fisher keeps a hectic schedule. His days are longer than they used to be as he sifts through potential article material and carries out administrative duties. He also keeps a close watch on the country's economic condition and its effect on the nation's workers.

Selecting material relevant to current economic events with social and political ramifications, Fisher finds the magazine sometimes "walks the line of controversy."

(More)

Fisher is no newcomer to the labor and economics scene. He started his Department of Labor career as an economist for the Wage and Hour Division of DOL. Later, he moved to BLS as an economist and writer-editor. His position with MLR has changed over the years.

"I went from a writer to associate editor, then managing editor, and now the executive editorship," Fisher says.

Raised in Detroit, Fisher says, "My father and uncles worked in the automobile factories, and they were part of the drives that organized the plants." Fisher can remember "the time when blacks had to be sponsored by a minister, or someone, to work in an automobile factory."

Fisher has brought the lessons of his background, ranging from parental guidance, to a brief stint in an auto plant, to his job as executive editor of MLR.

'My folks always taught us to do our best," Fisher says, "and if that won't do, then try again. I think if my personal life has had any effect on my job, it's dedication to doing the best I know how."

The Review's "number one priority," he adds, "is to provide reliable readable information to policymakers and the general public, too."

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Week of January 3, 1977

WIN PROGRAM FINDS 211,000 FULL-TIME
JOBS FOR WELFARE RECIPIENTS IN FY 1976

WASHINGTON -- The Work Incentive (WIN) program found 211,000 full-time, unsubsidized jobs for welfare recipients in fiscal year 1976, a fourth more than the year before. In addition, WIN found 20,000 part-time jobs for the recipients.

These and other highlights appear in "WIN in '76", the seventh annual report to the Congress on the Work Incentive program.

WIN, which helps unemployed recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) get jobs and become self-sufficient, is jointly administered by the Social and Rehabilitation Service, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor.

The report, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1976, also showed that:

--The average hourly starting wage for the newly-employed workers was $2.90. For men, the average was $3.50; for women, $2.55.

--Of the more than two million persons in the program during the year, about 675,000 received services to improve their employability.

--More than half were in the 22-39-year age group; nearly three-fourths were women, and a little more than half were white.

--Supportive services provided to enable WIN registrants to take jobs or prepare for jobs included day care, home management, family planning, remedial aid, and transportation.

Among the individuals helped by WIN were:

--A 58-year-old father with only an eighth grade education who was given training as a welder and placed as a heliarc welder at $4.19 an hour.

--A 17-year-old girl who was placed in nurse's aide training after high school graduation. While employed in a hospital, she took further training on her

(More)

own. Now, several years later, she is a registered nurse, working as a floor supervisor in the hospital.

--An unemployed father, over 40 and an eighth-grade drop-out, who was advised by WIN staff about improving appearance and attitudes and "selling yourself" to an employer. Shortly after, he returned to the WIN office shouting, "I sold myself! I sold myself! --as a security guard.

--A young women who participated in a special WIN project to train women in non-traditional jobs and was placed as the first women fiberglass mechanic with a major U.S. airline. She earns $61 a day.

To be eligible for assistance, all AFDC applicants must register for WIN except children under 16, those 16-21 attending school full-time, persons who are ill, incapacitated, or elderly, persons too remote from a WIN project to take part, persons needed at home to care for children under six or invalids, and mothers or female caretakers of a child if the father or other male relative in the home has registered. Exempt AFDC recipients may volunteer for WIN; in fiscal year 1976, they were about one-fifth of all WIN registrants.

During fiscal year 1976, the WIN program spent about $322 million. The federal government contributes 90 percent of WIN expenditures, the states 10.

WIN was established by Congress under 1967 amendments to the Social Security Act and was revised in 1971 to put further stress on job referral.

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Week of January 3, 1977

STATES TO GET $15.2 MILLION TO PROVIDE
3,800 JOBS FOR OLDER WORKERS

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Department of Labor is allocating $15.2 million to state governors to provide 3,800 part-time community services jobs to low-income persons aged 55 and over for one year under the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), beginning July 1, 1977.

A notice that appeared in the Federal Register requests the governors of the 50 states, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and the Virgin Islands, and the mayor of the District of Columbia, to apply for a project grant under SCSEP.

This is the first time the Labor Department has taken steps to involve all state and territorial governments in the administration of this program. SCSEP is authorized by Title IX of the Older Americans Act as amended in 1975.

SCSEP projects currently operate in every state and territory and in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

About 15,000 part-time jobs are currently being supported under the SCSEP. All grants for existing projects, which have been funded from a FY 1976 appropriation, will be completed on June 30, 1977.

For the 12-month period beginning July 1, 1977, Congress has provided an appropriation of $90.6 million to subsidize 22,600 jobs. During this period, 18,800 jobs will be under the sponsorship of the five national organizations and the remaining 3,800 jobs will be under state governments, with the Labor Department apportioning $15,234,000 for the latter.

(More)

State governments must notify the Labor Department of their intent to apply for the grant no later than Feb. 28, 1977. In the event a governor determines not to apply for the state's allotment, the governor may specify to the Labor Department the national organization it wishes to receive the allotment.

Discretion is given to the governor to place responsibility for the administration and operation of the state's SCSEP grant in whichever state agency or organizational unit is deemed most appropriate. A governor may also choose to implement projects at the local level through subgrants with units of local government and private nonprofit organizations.

With their wages subsidized by the Federal government, program participants work in a wide variety of activities, such as day-care centers, schools, hospitals, senior citizens centers, and beautification, conservation, and restoration projects.

In addition to subsidized employment, the program provides participants with yearly physical examinations, personal and job-related counseling, job training, and, in some cases, placement into regular, unsubsidized jobs. While offering participants a needed income supplement, the SCSEP offers the communities in which it operates a federally supported pool of manpower which can be drawn upon to augment existing services or to create new ones.

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Week of January 3, 1977

110 PHILADELPHIA YOUTH
TO BE PREPARED FOR APPRENTICESHIP

WASHINGTON -- Under a $169,854 contract renewal, the Negro Trade Union Leadership Council (NTULC) of Philadelphia will prepare 110 young people for apprenticeship openings in skilled trades and crafts, the U.S. Department of Labor announced.

More than 800 apprenticeship prospects will be recruited by the NTULC over the next 12 months to help fill openings in the various trades and crafts.

The NTULC has placed 703 young people in apprenticeship and served a total of about 6,500 others over a nine-year period. The average starting wage for people in apprenticeship was $5.75 per hour in 1976.

The NTULC mainly recruits minority youth, including women, for placement as apprentices. It provides up to ten weeks of intensive tutoring to prepare candidates to take the tests for specific trades and crafts as they are announced. Assistance in passing the General Education Development (GED) test is also provided, to qualify people for a high school equivalency certificate.

Funded under Title III of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the contract is administered by the Department's Employment and Training Administration (ETA).

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Week of January 3, 1977

LABOR DEPARTMENT CONTRACT PROVIDES
APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR 50 IN DELAWARE

WASHINGTON -- The Delaware Plan, Inc., has received a $58,250 contract renewal to prepare 50 people, mostly from minority groups, for apprenticeship openings in the skilled trades and crafts in Delaware, the U.S. Labor Department announced.

Since 1971, the Delaware Plan has qualified 160 persons, ranging between ages 18 and 50 for apprenticeships through its outreach program aimed mainly at minority group candidates. Included last year were five women in nontraditional jobs in oil refineries and chemical plants. During the same period the plan has provided services to 2,500 other people. These include help in obtaining a General Educational Development certificate (equivalent to a high school diploma), and job counseling services.

Apprenticeship candidates are tutored up to 10 weeks to pass the qualification tests established for entry into apprenticeship. Where such opportunities are scarce, candidates are assisted in entering other skilled trades in entry-level positions.

The contract is funded under Title III of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

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Week of January 3, 1977

MARSHALL 'OUTSTANDING' CHOICE FOR LABOR SECRETARY, USERY SAYS

WASHINGTON -- Labor Secretary W. J. Usery issued the following statement regarding the nomination of F. Ray Marshall as Secretary of Labor:

"Dr. F. Ray Marshall is an outstanding choice as Secretary of Labor.

"His competence in the field of economics, together with his knowledge of the vast array of issues affecting the American worker, make Dr. Marshall uniquely qualified for the job.

"I am confident that he will have great success.

"I have pledged to him my complete support during the transition and beyond, and I wish him Godspeed."

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Week of January 3, 1977

THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX--NOVEMBER 1976

WASHINGTON -- The Consumer Price Index rose 0.3 percent in November before seasonal adjustment to 173.8 (1967=100), the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. The November CPI was up 5.0 percent from a year ago.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the CPI increased 0.3 percent in November, the same as in October. The index rose 0.4 percent in September and 0.5 percent in each of the preceding 3 months. The food index declined 0.2 percent in November after seasonal adjustment; this decline followed relatively small increases in recent months and was the first decline since early in 1976.

The index for commodities other than food rose 0.4 percent in November for the third consecutive month, following increases of about 0.6 percent during the summer months. The services index also increased 0.4 percent in November, after seasonal adjustment, compared with increases of 0.5 percent in September and October.

The food index declined in November as a result of lower prices for many types of food purchased in grocery stores. Fresh vegetable prices declined 6.5 percent after seasonal adjustment, following 3 months of large increases.

Prices for dairy products declined in November for the first time since early this year. Pork prices--moving down for the sixth consecutive month--declined 3.1 percent, about as much as in recent months. Prices for poultry, cereal and bakery products, processed fruits and vegetables, and sugar also declined in November.

Beef prices, however, rose 2.2 percent in November, compared with 0.5 percent in October. Prices for fresh fruits, eggs, and coffee also continued to increase.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, prices rose for most commodities other than food in November. Apparel prices increased 0.3 percent, after declining slightly in October. Prices for furniture and tobacco products moved up sharply in November

(More)

and by more than in recent months. The used car index rose 0.9 percent after seasonal adjustment, following declines in September and October.

On the other hand, the new car index increased 0.1 percent in November, compared with 1.4 percent in October and 1.1 percent in September. The gasoline and motor oil index rose 0.7 percent after seasonal adjustment, about half as much as in October. The index for fuel oil and coal increased 0.2 percent, the same as in October.

In the services component, the index for household services other than rent declined 0.1 percent after seasonal adjustment--the first decrease since early 1971. The index for mortgage interest rates declined 2.1 percent after seasonal adjustment in November, twice as much as in recent months.

The index for gas and electricity rose slightly after seasonal adjustment, following increases of 1.3 percent in September and October. The index for transportation services increased 0.8 percent, about the same as in October as auto insurance rates and parking fees continued to rise rapidly.

The index for medical care services, however, increased 1.5 percent, considerably more than in recent months as a result of the annual adjustment for retained earnings of health insurance companies as well as large increases in physicians' fees and hospital service charges.

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Week of January 3, 1977

REAL EARNINGS IN NOVEMBER 1976

WASHINGTON -- Real gross average weekly earnings increased 1.0 percent from October to November after allowance for the usual seasonal variation, the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

Preliminary real earnings figures for November cover full-time and part-time workers on production or nonsupervisory jobs in the private nonfarm sector of the American economy. Real earnings--or earnings in constant dollars--are calculated by adjusting earnings in current dollars for changes in the Consumer Price Index.

The increase in real gross average weekly earnings was due to a 1.0 percent increase in average hourly earnings and a 0.3 percent increase in average weekly hours which offset a 0.3 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index.

Over the year, real average weekly earnings were up 1.8 percent. Average hourly earnings increased 6.8 percent counteracting a 5.0 percent rise in the Consumer Price Index.

Before adjustment for the increase in the Consumer Price Index and for seasonal change, average weekly earnings were $181.00 in November, compared with $169.42 a year earlier.

Real spendable earnings--average real weekly pay of all workers reduced by Social Security and federal income tax rates applicable to a married worker with three dependents who earned the average amount--increased 0.3 percent from the October level, seasonally adjusted. This increase was due to the rise in real gross average weekly earnings.

Over the year, real spendable earnings were unchanged as an increase in the tax effect offset a 1.8 percent increase in real gross average weekly earnings.

The Hourly Earnings Index in dollars of constant purchasing power increased 0.2 percent from October. Compared with a year ago, the index was up 1.6 percent. The index excludes the effects of overtime in manufacturing and of interindustry shifts, such as the shift of workers between high-wage and low-wage industries.

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Dear Consumer

Is Solar Right For You?

By Virginia Knauer
Special Assistant to the President
and Director
Office of Consumer Affairs
Department of Health, Education and Welfare

The dream of capturing energy directly from the sun is as old as man himself. Now that day has arrived. Perhaps no new energy technology has caught the imagination of consumers as much as solar energy.

To help you find out if solar is right for you, the Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) and the Federal Energy Administration (FEA) have published a booklet called Buying Solar, which gives basic information on how a solar system works and helps to answer some of the major questions a consumer should ask before purchasing a system, including:

1. Is solar suitable for my house?

According to the booklet, solar energy is not right for everyone's house. First, there has to be enough space to handle the system's collector and storage units. Another important concern is having a soundly insulated house. If you are losing heat because of poor insulation, it is more economical to save heat through better insulation than by adding heat through a solar system.

2. Is solar a worthwhile investment?

The booklet reports that buying a solar system is somewhat like buying a house: Your initial costs will be higher than the cost of using—in the case of a house, renting—gas or electricity, but, once the system is paid for, you will have free energy coming into your home.

Besides answering these and other questions, Buying Solar suggests that consumers thinking of buying a solar system should take these precautions to make sure they get their money's worth:

- Ask for proof that the product will perform as advertised. If the seller makes verbal claims that are not reflected in the literature handed out, ask him to write those claims down and sign his name. If the system you are buying is not sold as a single package by one manufacturer, obtain assurance that the seller has had the professional experience of choosing the components properly.
- Examine the warranty carefully. Also, be sure you will know specifically who will service the solar system if something goes wrong.
- When choosing a company, be wary of sellers who use post office box numbers. Also, don't forget your local consumer office or Better Business Bureau. Both may be able to help you determine whether a seller is reputable or not.
- If you have what appears to be a legitimate complaint, notify the local district attorney's office immediately, the Better Business Bureau, and the local consumer protection agency.

For a copy of Buying Solar, write to Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colo. 81009. The price is $1.30.

GPO 911-749

Week of January 3, 1977

FILLERS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The U.S. Department of Labor reports that the employment outlook for pharmacists is expected to be very good through the mid-1980s. Growth of the occupation is expected to be about as fast as the average for all occupations.

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Employment of physical therapists, reports the Bureau of Labor Statistics, is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through the mid-1980s. Employment opportunities will be best in suburban and rural areas.

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The U.S. Department of Labor reports that employment for merchant sailors is expected to decline through the mid-1980s. Some job openings will arise each year, however, due to the need to replace experienced sailors who retire, die, or quit for other reasons.

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The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that despite increases in construction activity, employment of construction laborers is expected to grow at a slower rate than the average for all occupations through the mid-1980s.

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Employment of insurance agents and brokers, reports the U.S. Department of Labor, is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the mid-1980s. Many additional jobs will open as agents and brokers die, retire, or leave their jobs to seek other work.

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